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## DUNKERY BEACON.

BY A WANDERER IN EXMOOR.

To stand upon the cairn of stones that marks the summit of Dunkery Hill, and drink in the cool, exhilarating wind, filtered and freshened by the Bristol Channel, is an experience not easily forgotten. The wild upland district of Exmoor, of which the Beacon is the crowning point, rolls away to the westward in a series of low, undulating hills. In the far south, the rugged outline of the highest Tors of Dartmoor can just be seen severing the misty skyline; while northward, beyond the beautiful little Bay of Porlock, stretch the foam-flecked waters of the Channel, mottled here and there with dark patches of shadow, having the appearance of submerged reefs, but in reality caused by shifting cloud-effects on the waves. The slopes of this solitary hill sweep downwards in magnificent curves of purple heather and yellow broom, ultimately widening out into the peaceful valley beneath. One does not regret the toilful climb up, the scramble through the deep ravines and over the terribly rocky ground, for every minute spent in the clear, sonorous wind that sweeps the barren summit is a fragment of existence singularly pure and elevated. One feels distinctly elevated, perched at this great height of over seventeen hundred feet, and dreamily watching the sheep wandering in the sunlit bracken, and a venturesome adder taking a siesta on a block of glistening granite.

It is a foretaste of the fascinating solitude that is one of the charms of Exmoor, although it is far from that feeling of complete and lonely isolation which overtakes the wanderer in the untrdden recesses of that grassy wilderness. Here can be seen, far down in the valley, prim, cultivated plots and slate-roofed farm-houses, the red soil of the Somersetshire lanes and byways, and many other signs of life and civilisation. The cattle—not unlike red ants at this distance—stray over the moorland, and

collect in the vicinity of a slender thread of silver that winds about the bright patches of green. The influence of the wind becomes, after a while, decidedly soporific; and if one faces the cool, rushing breeze, humming melodiously through the cairn of stones, to scan the broad, shimmering expanse of the Bristol Channel, a drowsy intoxication is pleasurable felt. The eye lazily watches the struggles of a brig, slowly beating up Channel, or endeavours to make out the dimly outlined Welsh coast that rises like a gray cloud beyond the waste of waters. Still farther can be seen indications of the Malvern Hills, a mere shadowy impression against the blue sky. The red-tanned sails of a lugger catch a glint of sunlight, and thereby signals its tiny presence in the vast panorama unfolded beneath; or the white wings of a yacht, not unlike the movements of a seagull at this altitude, are boldly silhouetted against the shadow of a cloud poised on a level with the Beacon.

Then one's attention is drawn to the pulsing flight of a moor buzzard, sweeping out of the abyss, and slowly circling over the purple heather, and mounting the slope of the hill. A striking and somewhat uncanny impression of atmosphere and distance is conveyed to the eye when gazing down on the gyrations of the bird's flight, as it at last drifts out of sight with motionless wing in the direction of Exmoor Forest. One cannot help following the bird in fancy to the wild, dreary upland, with a traveller's longing to foot the treeless wilderness of rolling hills, and lose one's self awhile in such perfection of solitude. Haunt of the red deer that once roamed in numbers through the deep coombs, and dipped their antlers for a morning drink in the river Barle, startled in the gray dawn by the cry of the bittern or the neigh of a wild pony.

The keen, salt air begets a wholesome appetite at last, and a rough clamber is necessary down the sweet heather and black burnt patches which clothe the southern slope. The pictur-

esque valley of the little stream called the Avill is soon reached, and promise of refreshment of a frugal kind is observed in the curl of smoke that lingers over a clump of beech. The marshy character of the soil is somewhat unpleasantly discovered, for the tempting-looking field of new-mown hay, traversed by a lazy, dun-coloured bull, conceals an overflowing spring fully ankle deep. At the end of this damp, odorous, and unconventional hay-field is the muddy yard of an isolated farm, apparently built in the watershed of the Avill. It is pleasant to sit in the cool, stone-paved kitchen and listen to the rough dialect of the typical west-countrywoman; to watch her cleanly figure bustling here and there, and then depositing a white jug of cool, real cider on the coarse homespun cloth; to mentally take note of the square, open fireplace; the bare simplicity of the rough benches where the farm-hands take their meals, and the goodly view of salt, white bacon hanging from the rafters.

The huge loaf is attacked with the smiling approval of the broad, open face, ruddy and clear as an old apple, while the kindly farmer's wife delivers a fusillade of questions. She cannot gauge, perhaps, the pleasure to be obtained at the summit of her lifelong neighbour, the Beacon, and does not hesitate to confess complete ignorance of the famed and highest point in the county. Once, the good soul mentions how the whole country-side flocked to the base to see the Beacon fired in honour of the Queen's Jubilee. The remark kindles the recollection of forgotten history, and calls to mind the important part played by Dunkery Beacon in the middle ages, when the only means of rapid communication was the crude method of flashing fire-signals from hill to hill. In the quiet atmosphere of this quaint homestead one can picture the lurid glare of the Beacon fire shedding its warning light across the wilds of Exmoor, startling the denizens of the dark coombs, and fringing the distant hills with the dull, red glow. What a contrasting picture now surrounds one: outside can be heard the bubble of the tiny Avill as it threads its way by the pollard willows through the luxuriant grass; the hum of insect life; the distant bellow of a cow too full of milk, and the general drowsy murmur of farm-life.

The sour, cool cider is drained, and a cordial hand-shake with the cheery little woman exchanged before parting. Regretfully one takes leave of the bare, spotless kitchen, pleasantly redolent with the aroma of bruised apples, for the folk are busy cider-making.

The brown cows thrust their wondering heads through the leafy hedges of these peaceful Somersetshire lanes, as if demanding a reason for the unwonted intrusion; and the droning beetle whirs in and out of the shadows that

now begin to lengthen a little. The air in these narrow lanes, overhung with trailing branches, feels damp and moist, and so one is not sorry to have done with the confined path, and tread the breezy Codsend Moor.

The solitude is presently disturbed by a couple of ten-year-old natives trudging along the uncertain track on the moor, their shoulders dwarfed under the weight of huge wooden rakes, and a miniature barrel-shaped water-bottle in their brick-coloured fists. The spontaneous greeting of 'Gude-dey, zur,' is quaint and courteous, and deepens the kindly feeling already existing in one for this peaceful upland, so out of the world, and yet so pregnant with the traditional hospitality of its inhabitants. Every passer-by has a smile of greeting for the stranger, and the applicant for shelter at the most primitive farmhouse is given a broad-tongued welcome by the genial west-countryman.

Looking backwards, the heather-clad hill of Dunkery is still in view, rearing its sentinel crest above the gorsy plains, and reminding one of the wild tales that shed the glamour of romance upon this still wilder district of rolling hills and breezy moorland.

#### THE LAWYER'S SECRET.\*

##### CHAPTER II.—ADELAIDE CARRIES OUT HER RESOLVE.

HUGH THESIGER went back to London with a heart full of hope. He knew Adelaide well; he had hardly expected that she would accept his love at the first offer. When he had been so far carried away by his passion as to embrace her without any right to do so, he had expected an outburst of anger. It came indeed; but something told him that she was not so angry as he had feared she would be. Surely, he thought, her heart must be his, in spite of what she said. All the greater, therefore, was the shock to him when he heard, as a fact, about a month after his return to town, that the girl he loved was about to become the wife of Sir Richard Boldon. In his grief and indignation, he set off at once for Hampshire. Thesiger, it may be mentioned here, was an orphan, and he had been brought up by his uncle, a retired naval officer of small means, who lived in a cottage near Chalfont village, about two miles from Woodhurst. Lieutenant Thesiger was married; but he had only had one child, who had died in infancy, and his wife had acted as a true mother to her husband's nephew.

Hugh arrived at his uncle's cottage late that night; and before he went to rest, he ascertained from his aunt that the rumour he had heard about Adelaide Bruce's engagement was founded on fact.

'Oh yes,' said the old lady, 'it's true enough. They are to be married in six weeks. I forced

myself to go to the Rectory and congratulate Adelaide. Poor girl, she is to be pitied rather than congratulated.'

'It's her own doing, I suppose?' said Hugh coldly.

'Of course it is. Nobody forced her to it. But I believe she is sacrificing herself for the sake of her family. Poor Mrs Bruce has a hard struggle at the best of times; and naturally Adelaide will be able to do something for them now.'

Hugh could have blessed his kind-hearted aunt for her charitable view of the girl's conduct; for already pity was taking the place of anger in his heart. He changed his mind, and went off to London again next day without making any attempt to see Adelaide. He told himself over and over again that she had done him no wrong, that she was herself the mistress of her destinies, and that perhaps it was more for her family's sake than for her own that she was about to do this thing. But it was all cold comfort, cold as the sleety shower that battered against the carriage windows as the train sped on its way. He would go on living as usual, treading the tiresome round of a briefless barrister's existence; but the future held for him no promise of happiness. The one woman he desired was not to be his; and for all the other good things in the world he cared nothing.

Mrs Thesiger had said no more than the truth when she told her nephew that no one had forced this marriage upon Adelaide Bruce. The Rector, indeed, had even advised her against the match. But it was too evident that what he had spoken had been said purely from a desire to pacify his conscience. There was a look in his pale, watery eyes, a weary, wistful look, and a tremor in his voice, which belied his words. The girl knew very well that he would bless her in his heart for the comfort, and, above all, the freedom from anxiety, which she was about to bring him in his old age.

The man whom Adelaide was about to marry was not, in the ordinary acceptance of the phrase, a self-made man. His father, Joseph Boldon, had been in his youth a day-labourer; but while still a young man, he had entered a soap-boiling establishment, where he had risen to be foreman, manager, and finally a partner in the firm. His son, afterwards Sir Richard Boldon, had thus started in life a rich man; and by dint of extending his business and advertising his soap in every newspaper and at every railway station in the three kingdoms, he had become a very wealthy man. His knighthood was the reward which a grateful Premier had bestowed on him for money freely spent in advancing the interests of his party.

Sir Richard had married rather late in life, and he had not been blessed with children. The first Lady Boldon had now been dead more than a year; and it was not to be wondered at that Sir Richard should think of

marrying a second time. He had looked about him for a suitable person to fill the vacant place; and his choice had fallen on the Rector's handsome daughter.

The preparations for the wedding were on a very modest scale, partly because Mr Bruce could ill spare the money even for the plainest of trousseaus and the simplest of wedding-feasts, partly because Adelaide could not bear the idea of any unnecessary display. She was, in fact, very far from happy. She well knew that while some would envy her, and some, even, might be found to commend her, none would, in their hearts, respect her the more for what she was doing. Of her inward repugnance to the match she said not a word to any one. She bore her burden without flinching. But her mother and sister could not help noticing a certain hardness in the girl's manner, and even in the expression of her face—a hardness which augured ill for her future happiness. She turned from the diamonds and the exotics which her septuagenarian lover sent to her, with unconcealed aversion. She could hardly bring herself to treat the dull, common-looking old man with a decent show of affection. But none the less was she determined to marry him.

A marriage settlement was to be prepared as a matter of course; and Sir Richard wrote to his London solicitor, a Mr Felix, asking him to come down to Roby Chase one evening, stay overnight, and go to the Rectory with him next morning. There the terms of the settlement would be arranged; and Sir Richard added that he would at the same time dictate to him the terms of a fresh will, which could be prepared along with the settlement, and which he proposed to execute shortly after the marriage ceremony.

This arrangement was duly carried out; and one evening in March, Mr Felix arrived at the Chase. He was an elderly man, with a smooth-shaven face, hair apparently just turning gray, and an extremely quiet and agreeable manner. So well preserved was he, that it would have been difficult to guess correctly at his age; in reality he was considerably older than he looked. He had never married.

On the morning after his arrival, Mr Felix accompanied his host for a promenade on the terrace under the drawing-room windows.

'This is really a magnificent place, Sir Richard,' said Mr Felix, glancing from the stately pile beside him to the avenues of noble trees which seemed to stretch from the further side of the lawn for an infinite distance beyond.

The owner was pleased with the compliment; he was never tired of hearing what a splendid house and estate he owned; and if a man may without absurdity feel proud of his possessions, Sir Richard was justified in feeling proud of Roby Chase. True, he had neither planned nor built it—the Robys had disappeared half a century before—he had only bought it. Yet a man who buys anything worthy of admiration, whether it be a house, or a picture, or a yacht, or a wife, generally feels as proud of it as if he had created it, and Sir Richard Boldon was no exception to the rule.

'Yes, it's a fine house,' he rejoined; 'and

the estate is a large one. Of course, I hope that I shall have a son to inherit the place after me. That will be the first point in the settlement you have to draw up. Roby goes to my eldest son; and his eldest son; failing him, my second son—and so on, you know, in tail;

'Just so. And failing sons? It's as well to make provision, you know.'

'Failing sons, for my daughters,' said Sir Richard, a little stiffly.

'And—hem!—in case of your surviving—in short, if that limitation should fail?'

'I don't see that the settlement need go any further,' said the knight, after a short pause. 'There might be a small annuity, say three hundred a year, for my widow. But I mean to leave Roby to her for her life, by my will.'

'Leave Roby to her?' echoed the lawyer, standing still for a moment in his surprise. 'The *estate*, do you mean?'

'Certainly, the *estate*; that is, if there are no children to come after me. Why shouldn't I leave it to her? It's my own, I suppose, as I've bought and paid for it?'

'To be sure it is.'

'Well, I choose to leave it to my wife for her life (failing an heir). But I shan't settle it, and so put it beyond my own power.'

The solicitor murmured something which implied approval of this policy, adding: 'You have told Mr Frederick Boldon of your intention, I presume?'

'My intention to marry?'

'I mean—about the *estate*,'

'No; I haven't,' answered the old man angrily. 'What business has my nephew to count on my *estate* coming to him, if I leave no children of my own? Eh?'

'None, of course. Only, he may have been looking forward to it, perhaps; that's all.'

'If he has, he's a fool, in addition to being a stuck-up, good-for-nothing, dandified prig. He's my half-brother's son, to be sure. His mother called him after me, to—Well, it's an old story. They tell me the young man has brains, and of course I shall leave him something. But that has nothing to do with Roby. I shall do as I please about that; and if my wife behaves to me as well as I expect she will, and if we have no children, it may as well go to her. She is worthy of that, or of anything, as you'll say when you see her.—Here's the dogcart. It's only a two-mile drive, so you'll soon be able to judge for yourself what the future Lady Boldon is like.'

The visitors were received at the Rectory with some degree of ceremony. The lawyer bowed low before the mistress-elect of Roby Chase; and as he raised his eyes to her lovely, blushing face, he confessed to himself that she was worthy of the richest gifts a husband could lay at her feet. He drew back a little, allowed Sir Richard to talk—as he was always ready to do—and watched her. And as he watched her, the first seeds of a passion that was soon to master his whole being took root in his heart. Even then, before his old friend Sir Richard had led his espoused wife to the altar, he thought within himself: 'He is an old man, at least ten years older than I am. He cannot

live very long. Perhaps, if I play my cards well, that radiant girl may one day be my own bride.'

Not a look or a tone, however, escaped the old lawyer, from which any one could have guessed his thoughts. He was respectful, pleasant, unobtrusive, as he always was; but it was with difficulty that he could fix his attention on what his client was saying.

'Write it down, Mr Felix—you have paper and pens at your elbow. Five hundred a year—no, six hundred for pin-money during my life; and an annuity of some trifling sum, say three hundred a year, to be secured to her in any event.—This is only *pro forma*, you understand,' he added in a whisper to Mr Bruce. 'I intend to do much more for my wife than this.'

Adelaide, seeing that her presence was not desired at the moment, slipped out of the room; and her future husband went on: 'I intend to leave your daughter, if she should survive me—but these things, you know, are very uncertain—a thousand a year for her life; and if she has no child, I intend to make her the mistress of Roby for as long as she lives.' He paused, to make room for expressions of gratitude, and the Rector forced himself to say something civil; but the fact was that he would have much preferred a larger annuity for his daughter in the settlement, and a smaller interest under a will which might at any moment be revoked.

'Take these instructions down for the will, Mr Felix; and prepare the two instruments while you are about it. I will execute the settlement as soon as it can be prepared, and sign the will the day after the marriage.'

When the two visitors had gone, Adelaide questioned her father as to the benefit which it was proposed she should take under her husband's will; and when she was informed of Sir Richard's intentions, a look of satisfaction came into her face, but she made no remark.

In due time the marriage settlement prepared by Mr Felix was signed and sealed, and shortly afterwards the wedding took place.

'There, there, mamma,' said the bride, as she kissed her weeping mother in her bedroom, before setting out on her bridal tour, 'you won't miss me. Marjorie is ten times a better daughter than I am; and then I shall be so near you.'

'Yes, but—if it were any one else, Adelaide!'

'Mamma! you forget that it's over and done now, and we must make the best of it.'

'Do your duty by your husband, Adie!' said the old lady anxiously.

'I will,' said the girl; and there was a ring in her voice which showed that she meant what she said. 'He has done what he could to make things pleasant and easy for me: *he* is not to blame.—O God, I wish I were dead! But the last words were spoken so that her mother could not hear them.'

Adelaide Bruce, now Lady Boldon, kissed her father, her brothers, and Marjorie, shook hands with the servants, smiled upon everybody, without even the suspicion of a tear, and drove away, apparently in the best of spirits.

Sir Richard and his bride came back from Italy in July, when the Chase was looking its best; and the county people began calling at once. The Bruces, poor as they were, were recognised as county people, since they came of a good stock; and the local magnates were disposed to be no less civil to the new Lady Boldon than they had been to the poor woman in whose place Adelaide now reigned.

The benefit of the marriage was chiefly felt at the Rectory, for Adelaide gave a large share of her pin-money to her father. Marjorie had new dresses, new books, new gloves. The boys went to school; and—most important point of all—the Rector engaged a curate, the Rev. Stephen Lynd.

The new curate of Woodhurst was a young man, of very grave manners, and with a thin, ascetic face. His straight black hair, worn rather long, made his pale features seem even paler than they really were; and there was at times a strange, incomprehensible look in his fine black eyes. He was a man of High-Church principles, but he kept these for the most part to himself. The country folks did not like him: they liked people they could understand. Sir Richard Boldon, however, was an exception to this. He had a great respect for the curate, chiefly, people said, because he was the only man in the neighbourhood who stood up to him.

A year went by; and when Lady Boldon reached the second summer of her married life, she perceived that a change was coming over her lord and master. The old man was growing rapidly aged. As time went on, his hopes of having a son to succeed him at Roby Chase grew fainter and fainter; and the disappointment preyed upon his mind. He became peevish, ill-tempered, and miserable; and his bodily strength rapidly declined. The innate coarseness of the man's nature now came out; Adelaide had a hard and bitter life with him. But she never complained—never hinted, even to her mother, that her days and nights were inexpressibly dreary, and that her patience was often tried to its utmost limits. Everybody said that she behaved like an angel.

The summer, as it happened, was cold and wet; and one rainy day Sir Richard persisted in going out against his wife's advice, the consequence being that he caught a chill. If he had been a younger or a stronger man, it would have been nothing; but, feeble as he was, it was not surprising that pleurisy supervened. On the third day of his illness, Sir Richard, who seemed to have been brooding over something in his mind, telegraphed for Mr Felix. Lady Boldon was not in the room when the order was given. The nurse had written the message at his dictation; and the first intimation Adelaide had that the lawyer had been sent for was a request from her husband that a room might be prepared for him. She answered that she would see about it at once, and tranquilly left the sick-room as if to carry out Sir Richard's orders. But as soon as she reached her boudoir, she threw off the restraint under which she habitually talked and acted.

"It must be that he wants to make a new will and disinherit me!" she cried aloud, walk-

ing up and down the room with clenched hands and flashing eyes. "I know that he has hated me—hated me for months past. But he shall not do me this injustice! I will not suffer it. After all I have gone through!"

Then she threw herself on a couch and tried to think. Who could help her? Who could influence her husband? Mr Felix—he was an old friend as well as a lawyer. And there was Mr Lynd; Sir Richard had always paid heed to his words. Perhaps he could show her husband the injustice of altering his will to his wife's detriment.

She rose, went to her writing-table, and wrote a hurried note to the curate, begging him to call next day. As for Mr Felix, she determined that she would see him and speak to him that night.

It was past nine o'clock before the solicitor arrived, and he was taken to Sir Richard's room at once. Lady Boldon had given orders that as soon as he left the sick-chamber he was to be brought to the library, where she had supper ready for him.

Patiently she waited, sitting alone before the fire, for she had caused a fire to be lighted, to render the room more cheerful for her guest.

It was half-past ten before the door opened, and Mr Felix entered, followed by one of the footmen. Lady Boldon had hardly time to greet the visitor, before the servant said: "Sir Richard's compliments, and he would like to see you at once, my lady."

The thought darted through Adelaide's mind: "He means to prevent my speaking to Mr Felix; but that he shall not do."

"Very good, Thomas. Tell your master that I will be with him in a moment," she replied.

The instant the man had closed the door behind him, she turned to her guest. "I must see you to-night, Mr Felix—I must. It is of the utmost importance; and you see I am prevented from speaking to you now. Will you wait here until I rejoin you, however late it may be?"

The lawyer hesitated. He knew well what Lady Boldon wanted to speak to him about; and he knew that his professional honour demanded that he should say nothing to her of that matter. But Adelaide's beautiful eyes, gleaming with the excitement of her purpose, shone down upon him, and he felt unable to resist her.

"Perhaps to-morrow morning?" she suggested, a blush rising to her face as she spoke. The blush made her look more lovely than before.

"No," said Mr Felix in an agitated voice. "I must leave by the six-thirty train. There would be no time then. But I will wait here with pleasure."

"Thank you," answered the lady quietly. "I won't keep you a moment longer than I can help."

Mr Felix sat deep in thought for some moments after she left the room; then he started up, sat down at the table, and ate a hurried meal.

When it was over, he purposely did not ring for the servant, knowing that if he delayed long enough, the man would very likely go off

to bed without troubling himself to come to the library again.

Another hour passed; and then the door opened, and Lady Boldon glided into the room.

### THE FLANDERS GALLEYS.

In the middle ages, Venice—the prototype of modern commercial England—among all the cities of the world stood first for enterprise, wealth, and culture. While Tuscany, though constantly disturbed by civil wars, shone with literary and artistic glory, the Queen of the Adriatic on her part had reached a degree of civilisation quite unknown to other nations. By following the history of Venice at this period of her greatness, the whole mercantile transactions of the world may be traced; and in the Calendars and State Papers, preserved in the Monastery of the Frari and other archives of the city, are found many interesting details of her relations with England, kept up for upwards of two centuries, by that famous fleet known as the Flanders Galleys, which exercised so important an influence in the development of trade in these islands, by introducing luxuries hitherto unknown, that quickly became necessities.

Venetian trade, managed by merchants proverbial for astuteness, and controlled by a Government that encouraged venture and fostered industries, for years held the monopoly of buying, selling, and distributing to other countries not only home products, but also the wealth of the Indies and the treasures of the East. In 1202 the Republic entered into an alliance with Baldwin, Count of Flanders, for improving the slow and laborious land transit of that heterogeneous collection from all lands, of which the city was then the vast emporium. Later, again, the Flanders Galleys, by arrangement, became the State mercantile fleet, with the Doge for its head, but with this strange inconsistency, that the Venetian patricians were forbidden to take part in any branch of commerce, 'that they might be free from anxiety, and have leisure to attend to State affairs.' The realisation of large fortunes in those days by private individuals was an impossibility, for every enterprise was largely subsidised by the Council of Ten, was under direct political control, and strict regulations of the civic authorities.

Somewhere about 1317, the first fleet of the Galleys, freighted with a rich argosy, left the peaceful Lagoons, bound for the British shores. The hardy races of the neighbouring isles, and the Slavonians from the Venetian province of Dalmatia, contributed men for the Galleys, each of which had a hundred and eighty rowers, and a sufficient staff to uphold the dignity and impress on others the power and strength of the famous Republic. On board was a physician for the cure of bodies, and a priest for the cure of souls; a *magnifico* or supercargo, who ranked high; a public notary, to adjust difficulties at the several ports and settle legal questions with consignees; and a scribe, to indite documents or sign papers. Two trumpeters and two pipers helped to keep things lively on *festas* and State

occasions; and pilots ensured safety from dangers of intricate channels and treacherous currents incidental to a coasting voyage.

The political economy of the Signory included the idea of a liberal education of a rough-and-ready kind for patrician youths of Venice, who were compelled to serve an apprenticeship on board the Galleys. By removing them for a time from the temptations offered by the increasing wealth and rare luxuries of the rich city, the State hoped not only to counteract the danger of degeneracy into an effeminate race, but, as the Calendar has it, 'they were to have an opportunity to see the world, become hardened by toil, accustomed to peril, and be willing to expose their lives for their native land.' If poor, their outfits were provided, and they were given posts of honour as commanders of the bodies of archers accompanying each Galley to protect the valuable cargoes from pirates, who infested the seas and rendered the very harbours unsafe.

The Commodore or Admiral of the Fleet had a most responsible, but not altogether enviable, position. It required a man of great ability and immense discretion, who, with a thorough knowledge of seamanship, must also be a merchant, a diplomatist, and a courtier. Orders received from headquarters were peremptory; and the arbitrary, uncompromising sort of way they were carried out was characteristic of the State that issued them. All pledges given were to be redeemed, yet no sacrifice of profits made on the merchandise committed to his and the *Magnifico*'s charge. In cases of dispute in England, the Admiral had the Venetian ambassador to appeal to, who in those days acted as, and discharged the duties of, consuls. The Galley Admirals not unfrequently entertained kings on board; and in an account of a banquet offered to Henry VIII. at Hampton, written by the ambassador Sebastiano Giustiani, an Admiral is shown in yet another character—that of a learned man. 'On the day of his arrival, the *Magnifico*, the Admiral, and myself went out of the town to meet His Majesty; and on coming up with him, the most noble Captain delivered a Latin oration on horseback, so well suited to the time and place, that more could not be desired, surpassing the expectation of his entire auditory, which had no idea a professor of navigation and commerce could prove himself so noble a rhetorician.' In the same account mention is made of Venetian glass, even then much prized: 'The rest of the company of the middling class was placed at the tables, which were not merely cleared of the confections, but we even distributed amongst them the glass vessels which had been full of wine—such vessels, doubtless as appear in pictures by Veronese, Titian, and other painters of the Venetian school.'

A little glimpse is also given of the English court at that time, in a record of a visit of another Admiral, Capello, to Richmond Palace, where the king, 'taking him into an apartment, showed him Catherine of Aragon practising on a spinet with Lady Mary, at that time nine years old.' This same Capello, declining the honour of knighthood offered him by the king, consented to quarter the English lion on his

heraldic shield; and on his tomb in the church of St Marie Formosa in Venice is inscribed, 'The man whom King Henry of Britain delighted to honour.'

The fleet of the Flanders Galleys, thus well manned, strongly armed, and excellently commanded, set out on its leisurely voyage to England, which voyage lasted a little over a year. The boats seldom left the coast, calling at all the chief ports, exchanging, delivering, or receiving merchandise. They first went across to the Istrian peninsula, then down the Dalmatian shores to the Levant, where, at Smyrna, dried currants were shipped. That this was as important an article for the English market then as now, is seen by an answer given by the Venetian ambassador, Contarini, who, when fears were expressed that, from some political complications, the currant trade between the two countries would be prohibited, replied, 'That cannot take place without disconcerting the entire population of England, which consumes a greater quantity of fruit than all the rest of the world; so accustomed are they to the luxury, and loving it so dearly, that individuals have been found who, from lack of money to purchase it on certain high-days and holy-days, when it is the customary fare, are said to have hanged themselves.' The Levantine merchants also supplied Europe with sugar until 1450, when the Portuguese discovering Madeira—where the cane was indigenous—interfered considerably with the eastern supply.

After leaving the Epirus, the Galleys crossed over to Otranto for oil and wine, then down to Messina for Sicilian products—dried fruits, confectionery, coral, silk, wine, sulphur, &c. England, if records are to be trusted, unfortunately failed to act with strict honour when dealing with the wine-merchants, who, it is asserted, met with duplicity for their own unexampled honesty, and were victims of fraud in return for their generosity. The arrangement was one of barter, the foreigners taking cloth for their wine, of which they said they gave 'overflowing measure,' but in return received 'deceitful cloth.' These cloths, made in Somerset, Dorset, Bristol, and Gloucester, they complained 'were taken and folded together, the outside of fair show, but the inside not agreeing in colour.' Eventually, the merchants refused any longer to give them 'overflowing measure' for 'deceitful cloth,' which, spite of constant edicts and prohibitory laws, remained of the same bad quality, till at last English cloth ceased to be an article of export.

From Sicily the fleet followed the coasts of Morocco and Spain, thence touching at the first English harbour, which was either Camber, or that now sleepy old inland town, two miles from the sea, Rye, both on the coast of Sussex. Here the boats parted company, one portion proceeding to Antwerp; the other, with the flag Galley and the Commodore, remaining sometimes at Sandwich, but more often at Hampton, now Southampton. Within this city of arcaded walls, fortified gates, and solemn churches, the muster of the fleet always took place, previous to returning to the bright city on the Lagoons. On the day of embarkation the sailors would pass to their boats from under the now built

up old sea-gate which, years before, those warriors passed through who went to fight at Crécy and Poitiers. A relic of the strong-armed Dalmatian race who rowed the Galleys still remains at North Stoneham Church, where is an inscription on the pavement in the north aisle, 'Sepulcre de la Schola de Slavoni Ano Dni McccLXXXI.' This was the burial-place set apart for the Slavs who owned their own 'Consortieria,' where religious rites were performed after their own manner.

Commencing on a comparatively small scale, the growth of the Flanders Galleys was steadily progressive. They were, in fact, the true pioneers of the great mercantile navies of the present day. All that reached England from India was brought to her shores by these vessels, together with the 'fashions of proud Italy,' then the centre of taste and luxury. At home, the amenities of life were still almost unknown. The dress of the people was as simple as their manners were primitive; and even as late as 1602, Coryate, in his 'Crudities,' records how much he was impressed when he first saw forks in common use whilst travelling in Italy, 'each sticking his fork into the piece of meat in the dish, as the people objected to those at table touching the viands they were going to eat, with their fingers, because they were not always clean.'

In addition to European produce, the boats were laden with Eastern stuffs, dyes, indigo, spices, aloes, myrrh, gums, ginger, pepper, camphor, gold, jewels, large pearls, diamonds, rubies, emeralds, turquoise, and other precious stones, all gathered by the Venetian fleets trading to India, Syria, the Red and Black Seas, the Sea of Azov, and the Caspian, at the ports of which the caravans and merchants deposited their stores for the Venice market. In the description of medieval court ceremonies, frequent mention is made of cloth of gold, and gold embroideries of Florentine manufacture, together with Venetian brocades and Genoa velvets, all presumably brought to the West by these Flanders Galleys.

In these days of express trains, and of swift boats traversing oceans, seas, lakes, and rivers with unvarying punctuality, it is a little difficult fully to realise how trade then flourished or fortunes were made. Overland transit was almost an impossibility either for security, time, or locomotion. The ambassador Giustiani—previously mentioned—gives an account, in his 'Four Years at the Court of Henry VIII.,' of his hurried journey from the seat of the Doges to the metropolis in 1515, lasting from January to April, the physical discomorts of which were only equalled by potential dangers from violence and robbery. Carriages were almost unknown, nor any roads adapted for them yet made. Giustiani therefore followed the general custom when he set out on horseback to cross the Apennines in mid-winter, where snow lay deep on the passes and effaced the rough tracks. On reaching Savona, the roads were reported both unsafe and bad, which compelled him to make a detour to Nice; and thence, by way of Lyons, Avignon, and Paris, he got to London.

Meantime, Andrea Badoer, his predecessor at the English court, anxiously awaited the coming

of Giustiani, hoping he would be the bearer of his letters of recall, and bring with him the ducats so much needed to pay off certain debts before leaving for Italy. But the Signory were more generous in their promises than prompt in their payments, and the new ambassador had money neither for Badoer nor for himself, for he states that money had to be borrowed for his own needs before he could set up his court in London.

If the ambassadors had been permitted to retain the rich gifts received from the foreign courts to which they were accredited, wealth, instead of poverty, would have rewarded their labours for their country's interests. But, by a strangely mean decree, all these valuable presents were passed on to the Procurators at Venice. Sanuto more than once mentions the use made of them. One entry reads of a resolution passed in Council to the effect 'to sell the chain given by the king of England to the ambassador Sebastiano, with five hundred ducats; also two cups given by the king of Hungary to the ambassador Aloise Bon, with about two hundred ducats—proceeds to be expended for the purchase of sixty Damascene carpets, to be sent as a gift to Cardinal Wolsey, as it would be well to make a present to this individual, who might be styled the king of England.' The purchase was made, the carpets duly sent; yet this insatiable princely priest remained unsatisfied, for another entry later says, 'Cardinal Wolsey adroitly urged the Signory to have him supplied with sixty Cairo carpets.' This request, made in March, was increased in April to one hundred. The Council evidently divided upon the justness of this request, put it to a ballot, when a heavy majority decided 'that sixty beautiful and choice carpets be purchased in this city, and sent direct to London, to be presented by our ambassador to the Cardinal in the name of the Signory.' The carpets were long on the journey, not reaching Wolsey till the end of the same year; and, on their arrival, 'he anxiously asked how many there were, inspected them one by one, and humbly said they pleased him much, but were worthy of a greater personage than himself.'

During the two centuries when the Flanders Galleys were the sole sea-carriers of the then known world, many dynasties of kings and emperors reigned and passed away, and not a few kingdoms and states rose to celebrity and fell into decay. There are records of the crews frequenting the old 'Boar's Head' and other taverns at Eastcheape; and in the streets of Southampton and in quiet Rye the coming of the picturesque foreigners would be the event of the year, when ducats would circulate, and tempting goods be exchanged with the simple townfolk, who, possibly, seldom or never saw any other strangers. But history repeats itself, and when the flood-tide is at its height, the ebb is inevitable. Portuguese enterprise had already begun to supersede the failing vigour of Venetian venture, when the discovery by Vasco da Gama of the Cape passage gave the final blow to the power of the Republic, and took away from her merchants the monopoly of the seas they had so long

and honourably held. The world had progressed, trade had developed, and the science of navigation was better understood when, on a certain May day in 1532, the last of the famous fleet left Southampton Water in ships that had gained in speed what they had lost in singularity of form. They were no longer propelled by stalwart men straining at one hundred and eighty oars, but wafted away, never to return, by sails catching the favouring breeze which would take them 'to the haven where they would be.'

#### AT MARKET VALUE.\*

##### CHAPTER XXIX.—ARNOLD'S MASTERPIECE.

IN spite of hard fare and occasional short commons, that winter at Venice was a happy one for Arnold. For Kathleen, it was simply the seventh heaven. Every day of it was pure gold. For women are not like men in their loves. If a man's engaged, he pines and frets to get married; he sees a goal ever beckoning him forward; whereas if a woman's engaged, she is amply satisfied to sit down in peace with her lover by her side, to see him and to talk with him. That feminine joy Kathleen drank to the full through one delicious winter. What matter to her that perhaps at the end of it Arnold's projected book might prove a dismal failure?—in which case, of course, they would be plunged once more into almost as profound difficulties and doubts as ever. Meanwhile, she had Arnold. She lived in the present, as is the wont of women; and she enjoyed the present a great deal too much to be seriously alarmed for that phantom, the future.

Besides, she had such absolute confidence in Arnold! She knew he could write something ten thousand times better than the 'Elizabethan Seadog.' That, after all, was a mere tale of adventure, well suited to the grown-up childish taste of the passing moment. Arnold's novel, she felt certain, would be ever so much more noble and elevated in kind. Must not a man like Arnold, who had seen and passed through so many phases—who had known all the varied turns and twists of life, from the highest to the lowest—who had lived and thought and felt and acted—be able to produce some work of art far finer and truer and more filling to the brain than Master John Collingham, the ignorant bully of an obscure village in Elizabethan Norfolk? To be sure, Arnold, more justly conscious of his own powers and his own failings, warned her not to place her ardent hopes too high; not to credit him with literary gifts he didn't possess; and above all, not to suppose that knowledge, or power, or thought, or experience, would ever sell a book as well as novelty, adventure, and mere flashy qualities. In spite of all he could say, Kathleen persisted in believing in Arnold's story till she fairly frightened him. He couldn't bear to fix his mind on the rude awakening that no doubt awaited her.

For, after all, he hadn't the slightest reason

to suppose he possessed literary ability. His momentary vogue was altogether due to his lucky translation of a work of adventure whose one real merit lay in the go and verve of its Elizabethan narrator. He had been driven against his will into the sea of authorship, for navigating which he felt he had no talent, by Rufus Mortimer, in dire conspiracy with Stanley & Lockhart. Nothing but disastrous failure could possibly result from such an undertaking; he dreaded to wake up and find himself branded by the entire critical press of England as a rank impostor.

However, being by nature a born worker—a quality which he had inherited from Mad Axminster—once he had undertaken to supply Stanley & Lockhart with a novel unspecified, he worked at it with a will, determined to give them in return for their money the very best failure of which his soul was capable. With this intent, he plied his type-writer, one-handed, morning, noon, and night; while Kathleen often dropped in at odd moments to write for him from dictation, and to assist him with her advice, her suggestions, and her criticism.

A good woman can admire anything the man of her choice may happen to do. To Kathleen, therefore, that first callow novel of Arnold Willoughby's—‘A Romance of Great Grimsby’—was from its very inception one of the most beautiful, most divinely inspired, most noble works of art ever dreamt or produced by the human intellect. She thought it simply lovely. Nothing had yet been drawn more exquisite in its tender and touching delineation of the seafarer's wife than Maggie Holdsworth's character; nothing more stern or sombre or powerful than the figure of the gaunt and lean-limbed Skipper. It was tragedy to her—real high-class tragedy; when Arnold hinted gently how the *Hebdomadal Scarifier* would laugh his pathos to scorn, and how the *Antiquated Growler* would find it ‘dull and uninteresting, not to say positively vulgar,’ she thought it impossible to believe him. Nobody could read that grim story, she felt sure, without being touched by its earnestness, its reality, and its beauty.

All that winter through, Arnold and his occasional amanuensis worked hard at the novel that was the man's last bid for a bare subsistence. He felt it so himself; if that failed, he knew no hope was left him; he must give up all thoughts of Kathleen or of life; he must creep into his hole, like a wounded dog, to die there quietly. Not that Arnold was at all of a despondent nature; on the contrary, few men were so light and buoyant; but the difficulties he had encountered since he left off being an Earl made him naturally distrustful of what the future might have in store for him. Nevertheless, being one of the sort who never say die, he went on with his story with a valorous heart; for was it not for Kathleen? And if he failed, he thought to himself more than once, with just pride, he would have the consolation of knowing he had failed in spite of his best endeavour. The fault, then, would lie not with himself, but with nature. The best of us can never transcend his own faculties.

Rufus Mortimer spent that winter partly in Paris, partly in Rome. He avoided Venice.

Though his palazzo on the Grand Canal lay empty all that year, he thought it best not to disturb Arnold's and Kathleen's felicity by interfering with their plans or obstructing his presence. But as spring came round, he paid a hasty visit of a few short days to the city that floats in the glassy Adriatic. It seemed like old times both to Arnold and Kathleen when Rufus Mortimer's gondola, equipped as ever by the two handsome Venetians in maize-coloured sashes, called at the doors of their lodgings to take them out together for their day's excursion. In the evening, Rufus Mortimer dropped round to Kathleen's rooms. Arnold was there by appointment; he read aloud a chapter or two for Mortimer's critical opinion. He chose the episode of the Skipper's marriage; the pathetic passage where Ralph Woodward makes his last appeal to Maggie Holdsworth; and the touching scene where Maggie at last goes forth, with her baby in her arms, in search of Enoch. ‘Isn't it lovely?’ Kathleen exclaimed with her innocent faith, as soon as Arnold had finished. ‘I tell Arnold he needn't be afraid of its reception. This is ten times as fine as the “Elizabethan Seadog.”’

‘I don't quite feel certain,’ Mortimer answered, nursing his chin, and conscious of his responsibility; he feared to raise their hopes by too favourable an opinion. ‘I don't seem to recognise it's just the sort of thing the public wants. Doesn't it lack dramatic interest? You and I may admire certain parts very much; and I confess there were passages that brought tears into my eyes; but the real question is, will the world at large like it—will it suit the great public at Smith's and Mudie's? We must remember that Willoughby's a quite new author; the very fact that the world expects from him something like the “Elizabethan Seadog” may tell against this simple domestic story. My experience is, that when once a man has stood on his head to amuse the public, the public will never allow him to stand on his feet again. And that's what I fear in this case; the people who read Master John Collingham greedily may vote Arnold Willoughby slow and uninteresting.’

‘Oh, Mr Mortimer, how can you?’ Kathleen exclaimed, quite horrified.

‘He's right, Kitty,’ Arnold answered (it was Arnold and Kitty nowadays between them). ‘I've felt that myself all along as I was writing it. The story's so sombre. It's better suited, I'm afraid, to the tastes of the generation that read “Adam Bede” than to the tastes of the generation that reads Rider Haggard and Conan Doyle and Rudyard Kipling. However, in patience must we possess our souls; there's no telling beforehand, in art or literature, how the British public may happen to look upon any new departure.’ And he went to bed that night in distinctly low spirits.

A week later, the manuscript was duly conveyed to London by Arnold in person. Kathleen followed a few days after, out of deference to Mrs Grundy. Arnold was too shy or too proud to take the manuscript himself round to Stanley & Lockhart; but Mortimer bore it thither for him in fear and trembling. Scarcely had Mr Stanley glanced

at the book, when his countenance fell. He turned over a page or two. His mouth went down ominously. 'Well, this is *not* the sort of thing I should have expected from Mr Willoughby,' he said with frankness. 'It's the exact antipodes, in style, in matter, in treatment, and in purpose, of the "Elizabethan Seadog." I doubt whether it's at all the sort of book to catch the public nowadays. Seems a decade or two behind the times. We've got past that type of novel. It's domestic, purely. We're all on adventure nowadays.'

'So I was afraid,' Mortimer answered; 'but, at any rate, I hope you'll do the best you can for it, now you've got it.'

'Oh, certainly,' Mr Stanley answered, in no very reassuring voice. 'Of course, we'll do our level best for it. We've bought it and paid for it—in part, at least—and we're not likely, under those circumstances, not to do our level best for it.'

'Willoughby retains an interest in it, you remember,' Rufus Mortimer went on. 'You recollect, I suppose, that he retains a fifteen per cent. interest in it?'

'Oh, certainly,' Mr Stanley answered. 'I recollect perfectly. Only, I'm afraid, to judge by the look of the manuscript—which is dull at first sight, undeniably dull—he hasn't much chance of getting more out of it than the hundred pounds we've paid him in advance on account of royalties.'

This was disappointing news to Mortimer; for he knew Arnold had spent a fair part of that hundred on his living expenses in Venice; and where he was to turn in the future for support, let alone for the means to marry Kathleen, Mortimer could form no sort of conception. He could only go on hoping against hope that the book might 'pan out' better than Stanley & Lockhart supposed—that the public might see things in a different light from the two trade experts.

Three days later, Mr Stanley came down to the office, much perturbed in spirit. 'I say, Lockhart,' he cried, 'I've been reading over this new thing of Willoughby's—this "Romance of Great Grimsby," as he chooses to call it—what an odious title!—and I must say I'm afraid we've just chucked away our money. He wrote the "Seadog" by a pure fluke, that's where it is. Must have been mad or drunk or in love when he did it. I believe he's really mad, and still sticks to it he discovered and transcribed that manuscript. He's written this thing now in order to prove to us how absolutely different his own natural style is. And he's proved it with a vengeance. It's as dull as ditch-water. I don't believe we shall ever sell out the first edition.'

'We can get it all subscribed beforehand, I think,' his partner answered, 'on the strength of the "Seadog." The libraries will want a thousand copies between them. And after all, it's only the same thing as if he had taken the hundred pounds we offered him in the first instance. We shall be no more out of pocket, if this venture fails, than we should have been if he'd accepted our cheque last summer.'

'Well, we'd better pull off only as many as we think the demand will run to,' Mr Stanley

continued with caution. 'It'll be asked for at first, of course, on the merits of the "Seadog," but as soon as people begin to find out for themselves what feeble trash it really is, they won't want any more of it! Poor pap, I call it!'

So the great novel, which had cost Arnold and Kathleen so many pangs of production, came out in the end in its regulation three volumes just like any other. There was an initial demand for it, of course, at Mudie's; that Arnold had counted upon; anything which bore the name of the 'editor' of 'An Elizabethan Seadog' on the title-page could hardly have fared otherwise. But he waited in profound anxiety for what the reviews would say of it. This was his own first book, for the "Seadog" was but a transcript; and it would make or mar him as an original author.

Oddly enough, they had longer to wait for reviews than in the case of Arnold Willoughby's first venture. It was the height of the publishing season; editors' tables were groaning with books of travel, and biographies, and three-volume novels, and epochs of history, boiled down for the consumption of the laziest intellects. A week or two passed, and still no notice of the 'Romance of Great Grimsby.' At last, one afternoon, Arnold passed down the Strand, and stopped to buy an influential evening paper on the bare chance of a criticism. His heart gave a bound. Yes, there it was on the third page—'Mr Arnold Willoughby's New Departure.'

He took it home with him, not daring to sit and read it on the Embankment. The very first sentence chilled him. 'When a man begins by doing good work, the public has a right to expect good work in future from him. Mr Arnold Willoughby, or whatever gentleman chooses to veil his unknown personality under that obvious pseudonym, struck fresh ground, and struck it well, in his stirring romance of "An Elizabethan Seadog." He would have done better to remember the advice which a Scotchman in the Gallery once gave to Boswell on a famous occasion: "Stick to the coo, man!" Mr Willoughby, unfortunately, has not stuck to his coo. He has a distinct talent of his own for wild tales of adventure, in which he can well simulate a certain air of truth, and can reproduce the style of a bygone age with extraordinary fidelity and historical accuracy. But the higher pathos and the higher constructive faculty are altogether beyond the range of his not inconsiderable powers. To put it frankly, his three-volume novel, in spite of obvious straining after the most exalted qualities, almost induces one to accept Mr Willoughby's own improbable story of the finding of his manuscript in a Venetian cook-shop, and to believe that he was really nothing more, after all, than the translator and editor of that excellent tale of buccaneering life in the Sixteenth Century.'

Arnold's head reeled round. Still, he read on and on. It was all in the same strain. Not one word of cold praise for his poor little bantling! The reviewer demolished him as though he were not a vertebrate animal. His plot was crude, ill-considered, and ridiculous. His episodes were sometimes improbable, but

oftener still impossible. His conversations were unreal; his personages shadowy; his picture of fisher-life melodramatic and unconvincing. It was plain he knew nothing at first hand of the sea. Everything in the book from beginning to end was bad. Bad, bad, bad; as bad as it could be. The reviewer could only hope that in his next venture, Mr Willoughby would return from this puerile attempt to put himself outside his own natural limitations to the proper sphere he had temporarily deserted.

Arnold laid down the paper, crimson. Very new authors are affected by reviews. He knew it, he knew it! He had been betrayed into attempting a task beyond his powers by the kindly solicitations of that good fellow Mortimer. For Mortimer's sake, even more than his own, he felt it acutely. One thing he prayed—that Kathleen might not happen to see that review, and be made utterly miserable by it. He must try, if possible, to break his failure gently to her.

He went out again, to call on her, and hint his despondency. After that, he thought he would go and see Stanley & Lockhart, to ask them how much they were losing by his novel.

He walked along with burning cheeks. And as he passed Rufus Mortimer's club, that clever young Vernon, who writes such stinging reviews for the evening papers, turned with a smile to the American. 'There goes your friend Willoughby,' he said with a wave of his cigarette. 'Have you seen what a dressing I've given that silly book of his in this evening's *Piccadilly*? "A Romance of Great Grimsby," indeed! "A Drivel of Idiocy" he ought to have called it.'

#### R A B B I T - L A N D .

No one who has not travelled over the Rabbit-infested districts of Australia can form anything like an adequate idea of the destructiveness of the furry little rodent whose presence lends so much charm to rural life in many parts of the Old World. Less than half a century ago there was not one rabbit in the whole of Australasia. A few were introduced into New Zealand in 1860; and into New South Wales and Victoria some eight or ten years previously; and now the multitude of them is so great that no one would attempt even to approximate their number. The hostility of man they practically defy. They march westward or northward, multiplying as they go, and devouring as they go; and sheep and cattle and men leave plains and ridges to them. The central Governments have contended against them with every weapon which promised success; and provincial bodies and energetic private individuals either supplemented these central Governments, or carried on the war on lines of their own; but the rabbits are victorious to-day in a more effective manner than they were ten years ago.

The soil and climate of Australia are largely responsible for this. Under general conditions, rabbits will breed five or six times a year;

on the plains of the great interior of Australia they will breed eight times a year regularly, and instances where this record was exceeded are chronicled. Bearing in mind that the litter seldom numbers fewer than eight, one can see what multitudes must arise if checks be not applied. The common estimate of offsprings from one mother in four years is given at over a million and a quarter; but if that estimate had been formed on the exceptionally favourable conditions which Australia affords, the figures would be much more startling.

None of the methods adopted so far to exterminate or restrict the pest can be called even moderately successful. Two contiguous colonies spend respectively twenty and forty thousand pounds per year in direct State effort; while hundreds of thousands are expended indirectly; but the answer comes as a still increasing plague. One of the most perplexing difficulties the Governments encounter in applying some of their remedies is what may be called an alliance, offensive and defensive, which becomes formed between the persecuted rabbits and speculative members of the general community. For instance, one plan of extermination permitted the squatters to fix the amount of the scalping-bonus, while the State undertook to pay back fourpence-halfpenny of every sixpence thus paid by the squatter. It was thought that under this system the squatter would see that the men he employed to trap, poison, or shoot did their work efficiently, the State and he standing together as partners, and proportionately bearing the expense. This theory, however, produced very human results, and results, too, which, were they not pernicious, might be considered amusing. After an expenditure of about a quarter of a million of money, the rabbits had mostly increased in number; and then it was discovered that on the terms set down it was more to the interest of many selectors and squatters to grow rabbits than to grow sheep. The rent paid per acre for a run was so small that the lessee who made good terms with his men derived, from cultivating and scalping rabbits under this bonus system, a larger income than was attainable in his proper occupation. Thus, one lessee of 95,000 acres paid in rent to the State £119, and drew as rabbit bonus £740. Another, for 117,000 acres paid £96, and drew £1330. Another, for 416,000 acres paid £1307, and drew £4005. One for 411,000 acres paid £665, and received £12,292. One for 450,000 acres paid £1997, and drew £12,781. Another for 511,000 acres paid £341, and received £13,325; and yet another for 270,000 acres paid £348, and received £10,490. It is to be noted in such lists that rent per acre is not uniform over the lands of any of the colonies, various classifications of land existing in each of them.

But this bonus system had another bad feature, for where the lessee fulfilled his bargain with the State, the rabbiter almost invariably bred rabbits on his own account. It was opposed to his interest to cut away the root of his occupation, and he accordingly so worked a piece of country that when he reached the boundary on one side, a new generation awaited him on the other.

For these reasons, the bonus system is now generally regarded as a delusion and a snare ; and though it still has admirers, it is unlikely to be again approved on any large scheme.

Fencing the rabbits out with wire-netting is an expedient whose promise has been greater than results yet fulfil. Victoria has stretched hundreds of miles of wire along the South Australian border ; and Queensland is daily adding lines of similar defence to arrest incursions from New South Wales. Some of these fences are four hundred and five hundred miles long without a break ; and if they prove able to realise the purpose in view, lines of fence thousands of miles long will come into existence in a short time. But confidence in these wire fences is far from being universal. Rabbits are often accidentally shut in instead of out when the fence is being raised, and even those shut out have in many cases managed a way in. Besides, it is a fact that Australian rabbits are developing powers totally unknown to their kin across the seas. There are authenticated cases of their getting through, over and under the netting, and of their climbing both fences and trees ; and in presence of such developments, faith in fences is subject to waver.

The tank trap is growing greatly in favour. This, however, is successful on a large scale only during the dry months of the year. A run dotted with these traps should be able to report well at certain seasons. A couple of stations using seven of them captured 23,000 rabbits lately in one week, and calculate that they can destroy 80,000 a month regularly. Poisoning the water is often suggested, and has been occasionally tried ; but, when tried, the results were not commensurable with the risks run. Settlers generally dislike the expedient. Birds get to the poisoned water, and even stock find it out. A like objection lies to the employment of poisoned grain or other food.

The air is constantly charged with scientific and quasi-scientific methods of extermination. Chief among the former is M. Pasteur's plan. A couple of the great chemist's colleagues are still in Australia experimenting on the subject. Pasteur's proposal is to inoculate the rabbits with microbes which will drive them mad. But to the settlers this sounds even more unpleasantly than the killing of them with poisoned water or food. The Governments were and are willing to make all reasonable concessions, and liberally reward the scientist who can exterminate the pest ; but the prospect of having the land overrun with millions of mad rabbits made them pause. Might not the dogs eat the mad rabbits ? Might they not next, mad themselves, bite sheep and cattle and other animals ? Might they not bite human beings ? Might not the birds of the air go similarly mad ? The outlook was tragically terrible ; and though the New South Wales Government still permits M. Pasteur's representatives to experiment on a little island in Sydney Harbour, it declines to allow him a free hand. A Royal Commission considered the subject, and supported the view of the Government ; and the community in the bulk support the Commission. The quasi-scientific plans are almost as numerous as the rabbits themselves. From every part of the

world the post carries specifics, or accounts of specifics, warranted to terminate the plague. Up until a year ago, the authorities kept standing an offer of £25,000 for an effective specific ; but so much time was wasted in considering schemes which turned out impracticable, that the reward was withdrawn.

The flesh of rabbits is very little used in Australia ; that is partly because the animals abound to such an extent that they are classed with vermin. Doubt as to how they come by their death also causes the public to pass them by. Of late years, the exportation of skins has received attention, something like £100,000 being now the annual profit on that account. But very much more might be done, and should be done, to turn both flesh and fur to profitable use.

Is there a means of exterminating the Australian rabbit ? Is it possible to cultivate a microbe in a chemist's laboratory which shall deal death to this national pest, while being innocuous to bird and beast ? Nearly two thousand years ago, the Balearic Islands were devastated by this voracious rodent. Is science more a match for it now than it was then ?

### BURGLAR JIM.

#### CHAPTER II.—CONCLUSION.

Two of the lodgers puzzled the Leytons very much. Jim Beadel and his wife rented the rooms under theirs. Jim was a burly, frank-looking fellow of about thirty ; his wife was not more than twenty-five, rather pretty, and of a cheerful, good-humoured disposition, which found vent in singing all the comic and popular ditties of the day. In the daytime she managed to go through some half-hundred songs in a style that was very excruciating to Rhoda's ear. The Leytons could not make out what Beadel's occupation was. He seemed to have nothing particular to do, and spent the greater part of the day at home. 'Liza seemed very fond of him, and he of her, except when he got tipsy on a Saturday, and then he was quarrelsome. She did not make any fuss, but simply said : 'He's not nice when he gets boozy.'

One day the Leytons remarked that Beadel had not been at home for two or three days, and 'Liza seemed very downcast. 'They've quarrelled, and he's left her for a time,' said Bertrod, who felt a relief in turning from his own troubles to discuss those of others.

The following day Mrs Beadel got caught in the rain, and very soon became ill, so ill that the doctor had to be called in.

'E sys it's inflummition o' the lungs,' said the landlady to Rhoda. 'She is mortal bad, and no mistike.'

'Do you think she would object to me going to see her ?'

'Bless yer 'art, no ! She'd be precious glad, I bet.'

And so Rhoda went to see her. She needed careful nursing, and, weak as she was, Rhoda determined to undertake the task, for no one else seemed capable or willing. Bertrod demurred a little ; but Rhoda silenced all objec-

tions by a few quiet words that appealed to his finer feelings.

When it was gossiped about from door-step to door-step, Rhoda rose in Darkman Street estimation. If not willing to do it themselves, they could appreciate its being done. The other inmates of the house in a rough fashion tried to help her as much as possible—nursing Rhoda's little Gertrude and tidying her room—acts which Rhoda hardly appreciated at their proper value.

'Would not your husband come to see you?' Rhoda ventured to inquire of her patient when confidence had been established between them.

Mrs Beadel looked at her inquiringly, and then said: 'He can't.'

'I'm sorry to hear that. I thought perhaps you had—had quarrelled a little.'

'Not we,' she answered with energy. 'Jim 'ud be here if he could.'

'Would he not come if he knew how ill you were?'

'Jim's in quod,' Mrs Beadel answered, half shyly, half proudly.

'In quod,' echoed Rhoda. 'Where is that?'

'Why, in prison, of course.'

'In prison?'

'Yes; doin' three months.'

'I am sorry to hear that,' said Rhoda. 'Was he innocent?'

'He was deuced unlucky.—Jim's never been copped before. He's clever, is Jim; and if he'd been sober, he'd have been all right.'

'I am sorry, for your sake, he cannot be with you. I hope he won't get—too much drink again.'

'Imen to that. If Jim 'll keep sober, there's not a cleverer burglar in London.'

'Burglar!' Rhoda exclaimed in horror. 'Surely he's not that?'

'That's just what he is,' said Mrs Beadel, excitedly and exultantly.

Rhoda told her husband, and he was as much amazed as she was. 'This is what we are come to,' he cried bitterly—'herding with robbers.'

Rhoda was afraid that he might forbid her nursing 'Liza any longer, but, to her relief, he did not mention it.

Robber's wife as she was, Mrs Beadel was grateful; and, little by little, as she got better, Rhoda found herself telling her patient her history.

'Ah! I knew you were a lidy, and 'ad 'ad trouble. A nice father-in-law. Why, my Jim is worth a cartload o' sich.'

Jim came out of prison just as his wife was able to do a little for herself. He certainly did not look in any worse health for his enforced holiday. He tried to express his gratitude to Mrs Leyton; but it was a very awkward attempt. But he and his wife talked over matters together, and at last he determined to give his gratitude a tangible shape. He asked for an interview with Bertrad, which was accorded.

'Your missis been like a mother to my missis, and I'm mighty grateful for it. I shouldn't 'ave 'ad the little ooman now, if it 'adn't been for your missis. Now, I've eared, sir, as you've come down in the world—

no offence meant. Everybody about 'ere can see you're a gentleman. You know what I am. Now, why shouldn't you join me and make a decent livin'? I wouldn't 'ave taken my own father in partnership, for I can work better on my own 'ook. But I'm mighty grateful; and I'll go 'alf profits, and put you up to the business.'

Bertrad did not know whether to laugh or be angry. Yet he could not but appreciate the man's earnest effort to aid him, and so he said: 'Mr Beadel, I am very grateful to you. You have a generous heart. But I could not join you. You see, Mr Beadel, I have been brought up to think that robbing is wrong in itself; and even if we were totally without food, starving to death, neither of us would touch a penny we had not come by honestly. Your ideas and mine are different, Mr Beadel. I do not wish to offend you; but I must give you my honest opinion.'

'I'm sorry, sir. It strikes me, sir, you're a bit soft-eaded. That is—I mean—ang it, what do gentlemen call it?'

Bertrad smiled. 'Eccentric, perhaps.'

'That's it, I s'pose.—But there's no more to be said, I guess.'

'Nothing—only, that my wife does not want any reward for what she did. She felt it her duty to help her neighbour.'

'Ah! that's out o' the Bible, I reckin. That Book's right about some things, I've eared. I s'pose that's why you can't see your way to joinin' me?'

'Yes; I cannot, because I believe it is wrong.'

'Well, I'm mighty sorry. I wish I could have your respected parent in the back-yard for five minutes, though; I might knock sense in 'im. Does 'e believe the Bible, mister?'

'He does not follow it,' said Bertrad with a sad smile.

The next day was the beginning of a darker and more bitter time for the Leytons. Rhoda, worn out, by the nursing most probably, sickened again, and it seemed as if the shadow of Death was resting upon her. It was no positive illness, only the wasting of all health and strength, brought on by anxiety and care and insufficient nourishment. Bertrad, not knowing where the money was to come from, called in a doctor. He gave his opinion with brutal frankness: 'She must get to a warmer climate at once—the south of France, I should recommend. It is her only chance.'

'I earn twelve shillings a week, doctor; I cannot well send her on that.'

'I am sorry,' said the doctor, less curtly; 'but she will die here, directly the cold weather sets in.'

It was now the beginning of November. Bertrad stamped his feet in agony. His father, he had learnt, for more than a year had had a house in town, and another at Henley, for he was nursing the river-side constituency. Once he made up his mind to take a pistol and confront his father. 'Money for my darling's life, or your life.' He gave up the idea in a saner moment, and also the idea that he would accept Beadel's offer; and in their place arose the idea that grew stronger and stronger, 'My darling will die, and it will be better for

her. I will keep sixpence for laudanum, and we will be happy together where fathers are unknown.'

But the cup of bitterness was not quite drained. His mind was so unbalanced, that he failed at his work, and one day, making a big error, he was given three days' pay and told to be gone. He went with a curse in his heart, a bitter smile on his lips. He pawned his watch and best suit, and then went home to sit by his wife, who did not know the new horror that had been added.

Mrs Beadel did all she could for the woman who had been so kind to her. But she was not marked out for a nurse, willing though she was. She and Jim talked earnestly over their neighbours' affairs, and many a dainty did they get for the sick woman, giving it to her with the fiction that they were just having a bit o' dinner, and thought she might like a bit.

Four days did Bertrod wander through the streets seeking work and finding none. He had three shillings and twopence left, not enough to buy a bottle of port wine for his darling.

The Beadels never asked, but they guessed pretty shrewdly the state of affairs, and their conversation generally resolved itself into a committee of ways and means for their neighbours. And that night, while Bertrod was casting longing eyes on the Thames, Jim sprang up crying: 'I 'ave it—I 'ave it.'

'What?' said 'Liza.

'I 'ave it. Wait till I come back, 'Liza—wait.'

It was the following morning about nine o'clock, and Bertrod had just sunk into an uneasy slumber, when he was roused by Beadel knocking loudly at the door. He roused himself at once. 'Quick, dress yourself,' whispered Jim excitedly, 'and come into my room. Quick's the word now.'

In five minutes he had joined them. Husband and wife were standing, 'Liza with her arms thrown round her husband's neck.

'Oh, I beg pardon'— Bertrod began.

'Come in, come in; good news, mister.'

Good news! Then it was not for him.

'I 've been to your father's, sir,' Jim began nervously, looking steadily away from his face. ('I 'ope you'll excuse 'im for the liberty,' 'Liza put in); I said: 'Look 'ere; your son wants some tin tremendous bad; 'is wife's dyin', unless she goes abroad, doctor says. If you're a man, give 'em somethin'.'

Bertrod's head seemed almost bursting as Jim paused. 'Go on,' he whispered.

'Well, sir, 'e looked at me, and I reckin 'e saw I meant business. Then 'e took out a pocket-book. "'Ere's four hundred and fifty in notes," ses 'e—"take it to 'em.—They've got nice friends," ses 'e. "But never let me 'ear from 'em again; not another penny from me will they get. I curse 'em with this!"

'Curse 'em again, and double the money,' ses I; 'but 'e looked so black, I picked up the flimsy and come away.'

'My father sent!' said Bertrod, his breath coming in gasps.

'Didn't I say so?' asked Jim, half petulantly. 'You must take her off to France this very

day. Take her, for you need it almost as bad.'

When Bertrod realised the truth, nature asserted herself, and he fell back in a faint. Jim always kept brandy at hand; and, restored by a draught, Bertrod rushed off into his room. Husband and wife sobbed together such tears as they had not wept for many a day.

But there was work to be done; and Bertrod was rushing about all day making purchases and preparing for their journey. Hope is a powerful stimulant, and even Rhoda laughed merrily.

They left by the evening mail, intending to rest a day in Paris. Bertrod vainly endeavoured to give a little of his unexpected wealth to Jim, but the housebreaker and his wife steadily refused the proffered gift. 'No, sir,' said Jim stoutly; 'it's a shame to insult me so. When I wants tin, I works for it.'

'Forgive me,' said Bertrod. 'I did not mean to insult you. But my wife and I will never forget your kindness—never.'

Rhoda kissed 'Liza as she went, which, she afterwards said, was the one thing she was the proudest of, of any in her life.

Bertrod laughingly said that his fellow-passengers would think, if it were not for the baby, that they were a couple just off on their honeymoon; and one or two seemed greatly scandalised at their gaiety. But they did not know that the pair had passed from death to life.

Bertrod thought more kindly of his father and his sisters than he had done since he left home. 'He is relenting, Rhoda, and he tried to hide it by roughness.'

Their days on the Riviera were days that seemed Elysium after Darkman Street. Bertrod was feeling much better, and, what was best of all, Rhoda was fast regaining her health and cheerfulness. Again could they talk of the rosy future, of what they would do, and what they would become, when they were back in England again.

About a fortnight after their arrival, Bertrod was reading at breakfast-time—Rhoda was not yet down—the English *Standard* of the day but one before. Suddenly a paragraph in the Police Court News met his eye, and his cheek blanched as he read: 'James Beadel was brought up again on remand on a charge of stealing several hundred pounds, the property of Mr S. Leyton of River House, Henley-on-Thames. It will be remembered that the River House was broken into on the night of the 22d ult., and an escritoire was forcibly opened and the money stolen. The accused, who is a man well known to the police, was seen in Henley that day, and the police arrested him at his lodgings in Hoxton. When charged, he said: "I'm only sorry it wasn't more; but it was all I could find." The accused was committed for trial at the assizes, which begin on Thursday week.'

Bertrod put on his hat and went out. He must have time to think! He saw it all now. Jim, rough, uneducated burglar as he was, had risked his liberty to save him and his wife. His heart glowed within him as he thought of the unassuming heroism of the man. 'Come

what would, he would go back to England and endeavour to save him.

Should he tell Rhoda? No; it would only distress her. He went back, calmer, now that his mind was made up. 'Darling,' he said, 'I must go to England at the end of this week. You will not mind my leaving you for a few days?'

'What is it?' she asked, apprehension leaping in her eyes.

'I do not wish to tell you now, dearest. It is something that concerns our future happiness—not nothing evil.'

She had always trusted him implicitly. 'Very well, my dear. But I shall be glad when you come back.'

He did not form his course of action till he reached London; then he made up his mind that he would tender himself as an informal witness, for he shrewdly guessed, from the way in which he had acted throughout, that the burglar would strongly object to his appearance in court.

For two days Bertrod sat quietly through the proceedings in court, waiting. On the third day his father came, and he knew that the case would soon be called. In fact, it was the first, and the prisoner was put in the dock. He did not seem at all abashed, but glanced nonchalantly round the court, though he did not notice Bertrod. Counsel opened the case; and after his father, the police, and several others had been called as witnesses, the judge asked if there were any witnesses for the defence.

'No, my lord,' was the answer; when Bertrod, pale and determined, stood up.

'My lord, I wish to give evidence for the defence.' He saw his father start, and a look of surprise come upon the face of the burglar.

'My lord, pardon me, but it was only through accidentally seeing the report of this case before the magistrate, when I was in France, that I am here, and I did not know with whom to communicate so as to be heard in the regular way.'

'Let the witness be sworn,' said the judge abruptly.

Bertrod told briefly but clearly, though with a nervous voice, the story of his life, relating how his father had cast him off, and how, through misfortune, he had sunk deeper and deeper. Then he told of his Darkman Street days, and how, in the last extremity, the money had been brought, which he really believed his father had sent. Then he went on: 'My lord, it was not till I happened to see a report of the case in the *Standard* that I really knew how the money had been obtained.'

There was a strong attempt at applause; but it was sternly checked, and the prosecuting counsel rose to speak. 'My lord, Mr Leyton desires me to say that he had not the slightest suspicion that the prisoner came on any such errand. If he had,'

'That will do, Mr Fardell,' said the judge curtly. 'I hold a strong opinion as to your client's conduct.'

And when he came to sum up, he gave voice to his opinion. 'We have to-day been witnesses

of the contrariety of human nature. Here is a man, holding a high position, who allows his son to sink into the lowest depths, not caring whether he lives or dies, because he obeys the dictates of his heart; and on the other hand, a man who is a confessed thief, saving that son from utter despair by—I can call it by no other name—an act of generous self-sacrifice.' Then he went on to warn the jury that they must be guided, not by their sentiments, but by facts.

They were not absent more than five minutes. In answer to the usual question, the foreman said: 'Guilty, but with the strongest recommendation to mercy.'

'James Beadel,' said the judge, 'you are a man possessed of sentiments that are incompatible with the course of life you have chosen. If you persist in that course, justice will infallibly mark you down. Try some honest course of life. I sentence you to one day's imprisonment, to count from the time of your apprehension.'

It was in vain to try to stop applause then. There was wild cheering in the street as the burglar and Bertrod came out together, and many pressed forward to shake hands with the robber.

Mr Leyton, senior, for some time felt what it was to bear the storm of outraged opinion. He was told by the constituency who had chosen him as candidate that his services were not required, and Society for once was on the popular side. Sullenly he tried to propitiate public opinion, and offered his son five hundred a year; but Bertrod refused it. There was no love in the gift, and he was not in need of money, for several lucrative appointments had been offered to him.

Two years afterwards, his father died from apoplexy, and Bertrod stepped into his rights.

Burglar Jim is now a misnomer. He is Bertrod's general factotum at Henley, and his 'Liza's chief delight is to gaze at the window through which he entered when he saved Bertrod and Rhoda.

#### BASS BROOMS.

BASS BROOMS are a production of the nineteenth century. Many of the generation that is just now passing away can recall the days when they had to content themselves with the common birch or besom, that had held an undisputed sway for so many years. Like many other useful appliances, its introduction was to a certain extent accidental; and it may be said to owe its parentage to that insatiable desire, which is even more apparent in the present day, of utilising every product that is looked upon as waste, or that can be had for the mere cost of collection and freight.

About fifty years ago a ship arrived at Liverpool from Brazil, bringing over sugar; and, as was usual in those days, the necessary dunnage or packing used when stowing the sugar-cases between the decks consisted of Piassava fibre—or, as it is now more conventionally known, Bass—which the stevedores in Brazil always utilised for the purpose. To prevent the ship

from being damaged by striking against the sides of the dock, the captain had a round fender made out of the Piassava; and this, after it had served its purpose, was thrown away upon the quay, and picked up by a working brushmaker. He at a glance divined a future use for the fibre, and taking it home, set to work steaming and otherwise preparing it, and made some street brooms with it. He was at first only laughed at for his pains; but he continued his operations, and managed to eke out a living. Little by little, the common-broom makers of Birmingham, London, and other large towns were induced to take up the material, and they were very much helped in this by a Mr Richard Dean of Birmingham, who, in addition to dressing the Piassava, retailed it out to the working brush-makers, and supplied them also with the wood-stocks and pitch, so that they could purchase a few shillings' worth of materials and work them up. The larger brush-manufacturers were slow to take up the industry; they considered it derogatory to their trade, and did not like the idea of interfering with the birch-broom makers. They could not, however, shut their eyes to the developments which were constantly brought under their immediate notice, and so at length paid some attention to the product, at first mixing it with other substances, and ultimately using it alone.

Bass-broom making may now be regarded as quite an important branch of the brush-trade. Elaborate machinery has been specially invented for the manufacture of the brooms. After the backs have been partially pierced through and centred for the reception of the bunches, they are brought into contact with a most ingenious piece of mechanism in the shape of a fixing-machine. The bass is placed in a hopper, so arranged that it is kept uncompressed; sufficient to form a bunch is deftly abstracted by a curious piece of machinery sometimes called the 'thief,' and at others the 'extractor'; and the fibres are by this seized, held, and deposited just at the proper time, whilst a punch following immediately, doubles the bunch, carries it down into one of the holes in the brush-stock, and there securely fastens it.

Piassava is received both from Brazil and Africa. The Brazilian variety is derived from two sources: that which is usually black and of a fine description is obtained from Para from the palm 'Leopoldina Piassaba'; a coarser variety, of a brown colour, is brought from Bahia, and is the product of the 'Attalea funifera.' The 'Leopoldina' grows in great abundance on the extensive plains between the Rio Negro and Orinoco rivers, forming entire forests. The usual height to which the palm grows is fifteen or twenty feet; but occasionally it is found much larger, trees as high as forty feet being met with at times. The fibre (Piassava)—or beard, as it is usually called—is the envelope of the young leaves, and hangs down all round, and completely covers the trunk quite to the ground at least, except in the case of very tall trees.

The Piassava from 'Attalea funifera' is derived from the decaying of the cellular matter at the base of the leaf-stalk and the

consequent liberation of the fibrous portions. In Brazil the fibre is used for rope-making; and it may be of interest to remark in passing that the seeds of 'Attalea funifera'—which are known in commerce as Coquilla Nuts, and are extremely hard—are largely used by turners for making the handles of doors, umbrellas, &c. There would seem to be a vast difference between the sight of a single tree and that of a forest of them. Some travellers tell us that a sunset viewed through plantations of this palm presents to the eye one of nature's most striking pictures of interest and beauty; but, taking the trees individually, other authorities describe them as of very unsightly appearance.

The fibre is collected by the natives, who climb the trees nimbly during the wet season, and speedily strip the fibrous foliage, casting it down to the ground. It is then roughly heckled or combed through stakes or sticks driven firmly into the ground, and the long and stronger fibres drawn out. These are doubled in at each end to about a foot, and made up into rude bundles of fourteen pounds weight, which are placed on rafts and floated down the rivers to the nearest seaport town. Here the natives barter it away for food—in most instances for 'Manioca,' a root much resembling that of a dahlia, which when ground becomes a kind of coarse flour.

The success attending the use of Piassava naturally induced many competitors. From time to time numerous substances have been introduced with a view of replacing it; but none, up to the present, have been found as satisfactory. In 1856 a patent was taken out for the use of material obtained from various species of the Palm tribe, in reality the midribs of different members of the family; in the following year, the fibre of certain South African plants was proposed. Only comparatively recently, fibre much resembling Piassava in appearance was introduced to the trade from Java as a material superior in many respects. It was thoroughly elastic, and however much it was bent, it did not break or snap, as many grades of Piassava are liable to do. It was very well received, and at first had a quick sale; but we believe has now fallen out of the ranks, and given place again to old-fashioned Bass.

#### K E S W I C K.

WHEN I am dead and gone, oh! lay me not  
Within some city churchyard's darksome mould,  
Where all around foul smoke its reign doth hold;  
But lay me rather in some country spot,  
Where the free air of heaven no smoke doth blot;  
Even in thy Vale, O Keswick, where my heart  
Feels in each sound and sight it has a part—  
Here I could rest me happy, though forgot.  
Then, when the wind of heaven on winter nights  
Blew from the hills of God o'er dale and moor,  
Bringing to me fresh memories of delights,  
Which I had felt upon these mountains hoar,  
My soul would haunt the hills I loved of yore,  
And happy be upon the mountain heights.

S. R. C.

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